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ABSTRACT

A discussion is presented of adult education, current trends within the area, and their implications for adult and vocational education programs. The document contains the lecture and a question and answer session. The following sections are presented: (1) overview, defining adult education; (2) major trends, discussing societal pressures for adult education, increased institutional and agency sponsored programs, increased demand for professional in-service programs, learner-oriented program development, university extension program expansion, innovative teaching by adult educators, and Educare; (3) minor trends, outlining programs for the disadvantaged, senior citizens as students, increasing numbers of adult educators, age level increase of students, and humanistic teaching; (4) trends additive or in conflict, mentioning credit and noncredit programs, self-supportive and government supported programs, career orientation and human growth, practical skills and leisure time persuits, solitude and social action, alienation and privacy; (5) integration and learning, examining adult education needs; (6) implications identified by participants, listing 10 areas in which vocational education and adult education might be affected by current trends and resulting implications; and (7) response to questions, presenting seven questions from the audience, and the author's responses to them. (LH)

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Occasional Paper No. 13

TRENDS IN ADULT EDUCATION WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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- Generating knowledge through research
- Developing educational programs and products
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs

PREFACE

The Center for Vocational Education, in its ongoing efforts to provide staff and interested personnel with current and pertinent information related to the roles and responsibilities of education, gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Dr. Burton W. Kreitlow for his presentation: "Trends in Adult Education with Implications for Vocational Education."

Dr. Kreitlow is currently The Ohio State University's Fawcett Distinguished Visiting Professor.

Dr. Kreitlow received his Bachelor of Science (1941), Master of Arts (1947), and Doctor of Philosophy Degree (1949) from the University of Minnesota. He began his career with an elementary certificate (1935) from Cokato Normal in Minnesota as a teacher in Montrose. He devoted his time from 1938 to 1946 in the field of extension service to 4-H organizations. In 1949, after receiving his Ph.D., Dr. Kreitlow became a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin - Madison where today he is serving as professor of continuing and vocational education. During his tenure at the University of Wisconsin he has held national leadership positions in professional organizations such as: president, Department of Rural Education - NEA; chairman, Commission of Professors of Adult Education; and executive committee member, Adult Education Association - U.S.A.

Dr. Kreitlow has conducted numerous and extensive research projects in education, has authored over 135 publications, and has written twelve complete books.

The Center for Vocational Education is delighted to provide you with this special work of Dr. Burton W. Kreitlow as we are certain it will provide you with valuable insight and knowledge relating to the fields of adult and vocational education.

TRENDS IN ADULT EDUCATION WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Overview

With the topic assigned we should be able to do a number of things, and we will. There are three things we will do—I will lecture - that's number one, you're going to talk with each other - that's number two, and then we will talk together - which is number three.

As a base for talking to each other there are some generaiizations—perhaps even principles—in the field of adult education that should be listed first. I do this as a precursor to identifying some of the trends.

First is the definition of adult education. I define adult education so that we start from the same place. "Adult education is an organized sequence of learning activities designed for an individual, or a group for itself, or an individual or a group in consort with others so that predetermined or program developed learning objectives are pursued." You'll notice a couple of clues above that indicate that programs are not necessarily predeveloped. They may be developed in the process of the program.

Individuals involved are those society considers adults by virtue of age, social role, and the opportunity to make their own decisions.

Higher education may be considered separate from adult education or as a part of it depending on whether the above criteria are met.

Adult education may be for grade school, high school, beyond high school credit, or for no credit; it may be self-selected or imposed; formal or informal; and it may attempt to reach individuals, groups, or the mass of society.

Adult education is organized; it doesn't just happen. Adult learning can occur without a person being involved in adult education and adult education programs do not always lead to learning.

I think we need to keep this last dual statement in mind. If you organize an adult education program it is no guarantee anyone will learn. Just because someone doesn't take part in your program there is no guarantee he won't learn either through his own self-design or through someone else's program. I do not call incidental learning that comes about through the process of living "adult education." Some people do, they say all of life is learning. You can argue that, but I choose to make adult education a bit more discrete. After hearing this long definition I'm sure you wonder what isn't included.

The second of the principles or generalizations we're primarily concerned with in adult education is voluntary participation. That's at variance with compulsory education at the elementary school level up until age sixteen, or at the high school completion level until age eighteen. Today

there are even some compulsory adult education programs. I would not exclude them from adult education, but in general we're thinking about voluntary participation. I assume, for example, that most of you are here voluntarily today, although some have had a little bit of social pressure layed on.

Three, adult education is a helping profession. In some respects it's like social work, law, medicine, psychiatry, and library science.

Four, adult education has some unique areas of its own for research and study—some examples: (1) the influence of experience on learning, true - this is an area that is important in elementary and secondary schools as well, but it is a primary concern of those in adult and continuing education, (2) the adult's ability to learn is a unique area for the adult educator, (3) learning in adult instructional groups, (4) program development by learners themselves, true, we occasionally give lip service to this in elementary and secondary education, but in adult education it is given reality in more cases than not, (5) learning how to change communities. The community development process as a learning objective is something that is primarily adult education, and finally (6) the self-learner as an area of study for adult education. This has been coming into focus, really moving ahead in the last several years.

Major Trends

Next we will be looking at the major trends from this background. There are developing societal pressures for adult education. The first pressure is the easiest to identify and is called the snowball principle. The more you learn the more you want to learn. There is all kind of evidence to support this in every country where it's been studied.

The more people participate in learning, the more pressures they place upon themselves to continue. The more learning a person is engaged in, voluntary or involuntary, the more internal pressures he has to continue his learning. There's a kind of "everyone is doing it" syndrome that also applies some external pressure.

The level of education is rising. Now there are some anomalies in this that one can note these days that ought to throw up a little warning flag. For example, the fact that 40 percent of all high school beginners in New York City drop out before they graduate is a new fact that we need to look at in adult and continuing education. But in general, the level of education in our society is moving up and if it moves up, it carries with it this pressure for adult education.

Another of these pressures which we've all noticed is the increasing speed of technological change and how it imposes a need for adjustment on all of us. The faster these changes are occurring in the electronic media, in all of the technology of business and industry the more the pressures are for learning. Certainly in vocational education with its own technological developments, these pressures are intense.

There are added pressures for recertification in specialties. These are becoming required in some fields and in some of the professions. Take for example, the health sciences, in engineering and in veterinary science. There are developing pressures in legislative proposals to require recertification. This tends to become involuntary adult education. Throwing up a little warning flag!

Management in business and industry, which has long recognized the need for continued learning in its junior executives, is beginning to consider opportunities for learning right in the union packages for its blue collar workers. And here again is another kind of social pressure that ties into this trend for more and more continued learning.

Going to a second trend. Institutions and agencies are organizing more programs in ways that help adults learn on their own. Even university extension services are going beyond the old correspondence study programs and beginning to think seriously about other kinds of program that encourage an individual to do some of his own learning. We run into problems in universities because we have been so credit oriented. Very often extension services think they have to adjust to all of the rules of the fifteenth century that somehow are frozen into the warp and woof of most universities. Extension services need to strike out on their own. Perhaps this is going off on a tangent, but the people in extension need to look to the future rather than the past in learning for adults who are mature, self-motivated, and proactive rather than reactive to what's going on in the world.

The individual learning programs are getting positive consideration. Some of the basic research on this has been coming from Allen Tough at the Ontario Institute of Studies and is being picked up by some of the leaders in adult education in the U.S. The recent book by Malcolm Knowles, *Self-Directed Learning* takes some of the concepts of Tough and integrates them with his own experience. The result is an approach to self-directed learning that makes sense for adults.

The professions are requiring continuous upgrading. In the past fifteen years in-service programs have almost become a requirement in the professions. There is some evidence right here in your own Center, where this two hour session is considered part of a continuing in-service program. There are efforts to professionalize those engaged in human services, to make them more professional within the goals, actions, controls, and codes of ethics that come with their service. There is evidence that these professions are maturing.

There are some efforts to build professional degree programs that are related to competency on the job rather than on research. This is an interesting input into universities of the stature of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Ohio, all of which have rather rigid academic requirements. Some in these institutions are beginning to think of professional degrees that have different criteria for a masters than the usual requirements based on the traditions of a research degree. Competency on-the-job is becoming mighty important. I expect that vocational educators more than others would see this in bold colors. There is an increase in credit programs for the professions. It is my belief that some of these credits should lead to professional competency. Some persons in the profession and in other types of jobs that have required college graduation are looking to the masters degree from another stance. Those who have been in the field for about ten years have seen new employees coming in with masters degrees. For their own protection the ten year veterans believe they need a masters degree too. This is for their own defense. This may be called a Defensive M.S. and there are strong arguments to base it on competency on the job rather than academic excellence and research potential.

Program development specialists are emphasizing the needs of the learner as the learner sees them as one of the priorities in the program development process. The learner's experience has replaced the specialist's knowledge in this regard. As society increases in its level of education, it is logical that we turn to learners to help in the development of their own learning programs. Even with the less educated in adult literary programs, more of the planning has involved the learners. Turning program planning completely over to learners raises some questions, but one of the trends in the last decade is turning much of it over to them with the concomitant commitment that comes with the less educated in adult literacy programs, more of the planning has involved the learners. Turning program planning completely over to learners raises some questions, but one of the trends has reached into almost all of the continuing education programs.

As we move even more toward a society of learners I believe this trend will continue. We can no longer gamble on planning programs from one's office or from the library. We need to look at the program planning process as other than something imposed. It is a process in which there is active involvement on the part of the learners.

The fifth of the trends is more institutions with adult education roles are extending their home based resources and programs. True, we've had extended programs for years in cooperative extension and in certain of the libraries. Today the universities are looking for new ways to extend programs. Vocational technical schools are planning outreach centers. Libraries have gone to mobile units. Adult basic education programs have moved to walk-in centers in some of the most decrepit blocks in major cities as a way of bringing continuing education opportunities to people where they live and work.

Outreach has been a theoretical goal for a long time for some agencies. It's finally coming about, practically all institutions are looking for ways of extending their learning opportunities because today there are takers. There are adults who are looking for these opportunities.

The sixth of these trends is adult educators are becoming some of the earliest innovators in using the most recent teaching techniques and technology. Adult educators who work with volunteer learners have a positive testing ground for their innovations. You try a new technique with volunteers, they let you know how it works.

Now the old way a volunteer had of letting you know was to walk out. In a way that's still a criteria that can and is used effectively. But what is happening today, perhaps as a result of the political involvement of the 60's, is "evaluative talk back."

Adult education institutions are accepting adults as adults more than they ever have and thus are opening themselves up to the response of the volunteer learner. With this comes the responsibility of the adult educator to practice what he preaches. Thus, in five or ten minutes I'm going to turn part of this session over to you.

There are many techniques and technologies that adult educators are looking at. For example, the whole potential of continuing education by the use of satellites is something that is being examined more by adult educators than by any other group. There was an entire conference on this held at the University of Wisconsin last summer. The adult education program at Northern Illinois University invited lectures on the potential use of satellites. Adult educators are looking ahead more than they ever have in terms of the technology to improve the opportunities for both group learning and self-learning.

The final trend is one for which you may accuse me of reaching too far down into the barrel, but I'll pull it out anyway and put it in my list. The concept of Educare is resurfacing. Have you ever heard of the concept of Educare? It came out of the dreaming of the former U.S. Commissioner of Education, Wilber Cohen, who proposed during the Johnson administration that potential existed for a built-in sabbatical system for all employees in the U.S. It was a concept that operated a bit like the Social Security program, with monetary support from individuals and from employers.

The idea spread around a while and then it dropped from sight. It's being rediscovered again in Washington. Senator Mondale, for example, is one that's looking at this and similar concepts as potential for the future.

The attitude toward Educare seems to be more positive now than it was ten years ago. It may be that this idea is going to have to cycle and recycle several times before being adopted. I support it in theory, if it is designed so that the greatest opportunities for its use are focused on those that need it the most. If it gets this focus it will resurface and coincide with a general recognition of the greater needs of the disadvantaged.

Minor Trends

In addition to the seven major trends I would like to identify a number of minor ones.

1. There is a greater concern for developing effective programs for the disadvantaged. This was a major trend in the mid 60's. It may have gone full cycle but it probably will never return to the low level of neglect that existed prior to the Kennedy administration.

2. More people are aware that adults can learn. There has been a destruction of a myth that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks." It has become "there are some tricks only an old dog can learn." Even universities are opening their doors to people over sixty-five and the learning ability of older and retired adults is being demonstrated in OSU's very own classrooms.

3. There are more professional adult educators in the field. There are hundreds more every year and this trend will continue.

4. The age level of participants in adult education is increasing. Education for the older adults is a wide open field in all adult programs from recreational to vocational learning. As indicated earlier more programs are open for the older adult and in addition are being accepted by those in the middle years who are under continuing pressures of technological change.

5. There is a move toward humanism. Student development is becoming more important than institutional maintenance. There's an easier and more complete acceptance of the whole person in the voluntary programs of adult education. The volunteer learner is more than just an intellectual body, he's a full human being. His physical needs, emotional needs, intellectual needs, vocational needs, and his economic concerns are considered by teachers and administrators. The voluntary adult student doesn't accept the intimidation of being considered only as an academic man or woman or only a number. He's a whole person and will get that respect or leave the programs. If he's given a pretest when he comes into the program, a test when he's six weeks into it, and another test going out he may not return. He's more than a student number and a test score.

Trends that Are Additive or in Conflict

If you've been listening carefully you've probably noticed some trends that seem to conflict - there are some. Rather than puzzle over them I'd like to put those and a few others into focus so we can see their differences or the potential for even more positive change when they are added together: (1) There is a move for an increase in both credit programs and non-credit programs in the professions. There is an emphasis on both at the same time. One group of professionals and adult educators is emphasizing non-credit in-service. Another group of adult educators and leaders in higher educator are pushing for more credit programs; (2) There are parallel pressures for more self-supportive adult programs on the one hand and for more government support on the other. For example, University Extension Services are asked to be more self-supporting in these times of recession and they in turn are pressuring Washington for more government help to reach the disadvantaged. We have financial objectives going out in somewhat different directions; (3) There are increased pressures for adult education to move persons up the career ladder and then there are equal forces encouraging a fuller life through programs to aid in self-expression and enrichment;

(4) There is increased pressure for practical skills on the one hand and for leisure time persuits on the other. I have always encouraged administrators of adult education programs to be positive and not apologetic when their institution offers courses for cake decorating, fly tying, and hat making. I believe that to develop a full life an individual needs to have learning for practical skills but also for the development of those things he can do to be psychologically comfortable, to feel free, and to create. At the same time I feel positive about those who are pushing for vocational programs; (5) There is a search for solitude and release from tension in adult education programs by some, they really want to get away from it all and have help in the kinds of programs that aid them to do that. There are programs for social action and the intense effort that must be given to that. To learn how to press for community action is the opposite of solitude and release from tension. Yet, these two trends or forces are both increasing; (6) There is a banding together to fight alienation on the one hand and the individual's efforts to maintain privacy on the other. Many of these forces may not be clashing but they are going in different directions. Taken together these trends and forces lead to "the boom toward life-long learning." We are becoming a society of learners.

Integration and Learning

What do all of these changes mean? First, adult education is being accepted in the U.S. Secondly, adult education agencies are searching for their most positive role in response to the trends. Some of these searches are for selfish reasons. For example, educational institutions sometime seem to climb all over each other trying to get at a particular audience that finally is recognizing its need for learning. We need to be careful that such competition doesn't destroy programs.

Next, the need for adult educators in all areas is going to expand. Adult educators will come into the field from both the front and the back door. In the past they have come in from the back door when there was a staff need to be met. Personnel directors in industry were often pegged as the guy who was going to be responsible for the training program whether he knew anything of training or not. These and others have been coming in the back door and only then searching out universities to obtain the training they should have had before they started the job. Those coming in adult education from the back door are certainly more conscious of what they need when they go back to the university.

A greater proportion of the Gross National Product will be devoted to education. This has increased over the past decade. The data from the U.S. Office of Education show this increase, but these data do not cover all of the expenditures that go into continued learning. Funds that an individual learner puts into his continued learning are going up faster than are the public funds.

There are going to be more efforts to answer practical questions about the effectiveness of adult education. This is happening because of the increase in the numbers participating. We don't know all of the answers in this field. This increase tells adult educators that they must get busy on the research that's needed to check on their own effectiveness.

Initial efforts are probably going to be on the achievement of specific competencies and on cost effectiveness. There certainly is a need to do some work on the theoretical framework, the background, and on need identification which we've puttered along on for years. Program development has been largely created from the seat of our pants rather than from research. Yet some of it works. Our philosophical base needs study and on adult learning we've just scratched the surface. We've gotten rid of the old myths but we really don't have many solid new theories of our own. And what do we really know about adult instruction?

Adult educators know that one of the ways to get a rest in a long lecture where the schedule says you have about an hour and fifteen minutes, is to get input from those who know more about certain parts of the lecture topic than they do. When it comes to vocational education, the total knowledge of vocational education in this audience is such that I couldn't compete and I'm not going to.

Implications Identified by the Participants

Fifteen groups of from five to nine participants each provided the materials in this section. Each group looked at the implications of the trends for a particular role or program. For example, group one identified the implications of the trends for administrators of vocational education, while another dealt with the implications for vocational programs after high school. Each group had twenty minutes to complete its task.

What are the implications of these trends for administrators of vocational education programs?

1. Administrators will need to develop a greater awareness and response to social pressures as they relate to vocational education programs.

2. There needs to be leadership for cooperation and coordination between vocational education and other programs in which adults participate.

3. Administrators will need to continually upgrade their professional competency and put greater emphasis on their knowledge of evaluation, research, and development. They also need greater knowledge of how to program for disadvantaged.

4. A change in emphasis from institutional needs to the needs of individuals is suggested

5. Greater emphasis should be placed on reaching out to people where they live and earn and learn.

6. Develop a means to provide and use the new learning technology.

7. Group decision-making is becoming more important.

8. The vocational programs need to be opened more fully to the total community to meet avocational as well as vocational needs. Educational institutions should be available to all.

9. Leadership in the generating of capital to support a more complete learning/teaching environment that will encourage adult participation and result in greater benefit.

What are the implications for institutions training (educating) vocational teachers?

1. More adult teachers will need to be trained and budgets increased for this training.

2. The adult teacher will need a broader background of competency in areas unique to adult education; i.e., program planning, the contribution of experience to learning programs, group instructional techniques, and other innovative teaching practices.

3. More flexibility needed in preparing adult teachers; extending certification programs into the community and on to the job.

4. Using the perceived needs of vocational teachers as part of the basis for the teacher training curriculum.

5. Specialized preparation is needed for dealing with certain sub-populations of the adults to be educated; i.e., disadvantaged, health sciences, etc.

6. More attention placed on appraisal of the entry level skills and knowledge of those recruited into vocational teacher training programs.

7. Develop the administrative flexibility so that the individual needs of the teacher in training can be met.

8. A range of curriculum offerings and positive guidance so that the qualification level of the person entering training is matched with the curriculum.

What are the implications for the vocational education of youth in grade school through high school?

1. Programs should lead to an understanding of the need for continued learning.

2. That training is for a career ladder, not just for an entry level job.

3. Classes could integrate youth and adults in learning certain vocational skills. Youth need to see adults in advanced training programs.

4. The learning should deal with "living skills" as well as "working skills."

5. We need to understand more fully the differences and similarities of the motivations of youth and adults.

6. There needs to be open access and open-endedness to the vocational programs.

7. Reduce the credentialing emphasis and tracking systems since they are contrary to open-ended and lifelong learning.

8. Revise programs that lead to lifelong vocational decisions at too early an age so that the open-ended program is realistic.

9. Make it easier for people, at all ages, to move in and out of the educational system. This will lead to the acceptance of vocational education to meet vocational needs when they occur.

What are the implications for vocational education after high school?

1. There will be a more positive attitude toward funding for such programs. Support will come easier.

2. The enrollments will continue to go up.

3. There will be more demand for individualized self-paced learning modules.

4. More cooperation and articulation (will be needed) among institutions and agencies offering vocational programs.

5. There will be more pressure for up-to-date equipment, instructional materials and instructors.

6. More courses will be geared to specific licensing and certification standards.

7. Advisory councils will need to be used more extensively than they have in the past.

8. More non-resident courses and instruction will need to be provided and an increase in non-resident instructors.

9. More use of all types of public buildings for the extended vocational program.

10. An increased use of the "Voucher" system for continued vocational programs.

What are the implications for the vocational retraining of adults?

1. Assuming more leisure time, adults will be (want to be, need to be) forced into additional vocational training.

2. There will be more learner directed training within business, industry and commerce.

3. Business, industry, and commerce will initiate more in-plant training.

4. Released time for learning within the work day and in the place of employment.

5. Increasing job competency and the subsequent move of the worker/learner to higher levels of the vocational spectrum.

6. Increased use of mediated instruction, modules, and cooperative programs between educational institutions and the private sector.

7. Extensive retraining programs of unemployed professionals and others to reenter the job market.

8. New training programs for those moving from phased out jobs to new and developing technical fields. Employer and employee may cooperate on identifying both transferable and needed skills.

What are the implications for the vocational education of women?

1. Compliance with the federal standards requiring equal employment and educational opportunities will lead to greatly expanded participation by women.

2. Extensive increase of women's participation in vocational programs which have been almost exclusively male dominated. This will lead to rapid expansion of selected vocational programs.

3. The traditional occupational sex roles will need to be examined; i.e., home economics for men, tool and die maker for women, etc.

4. Adjustment in programs of family living to account for the more extended period of occupational preparation.

What are the implications for special vocational programs for the economically disadvantaged?

1. There may be a greater need for special programs as the "mainstream" participates even more than in the past.

2. With an increase in the program off of campus the disadvantaged may become drawn into the education community.

3. Large increases in vocational programs may provide an "economy of scale" that permits special non-reimbursed programs for those normally unable to participate for financial reasons.

4. It is unlikely, but possible, that the disadvantaged will be considered to be "outside" and thus ignored as pressures for new programs come from the better educated and economically secure.

What are the implications for vocational supervisors in State Department of Education?

1. Increased use of advisory committees.

2. Greater emphasis on in-service education and the use of a greater variety of learning situations in which in-service is held for vocational educators in the field.

3. Greater in-service education for themselves in order to keep up with the field.

   a) their technological competency.
   b) their competency in the organization of in-service education and supervisory leadership.

4. A built in plan for their own formal professional development (the EDUCARE concept for supervisors).

5. Increased cooperation with college and universities training vocational educators.

What are the implications for graduate study in vocational education?

1. Vocational education will be in more locations: schools, industry, business, homes, unions, communication fields, etc.

2. More demand for graduate study in vocational education.

3. Emphasis on career counseling.

4. Demand to design more flexible systems of graduate study.

5. Development of a greater research thrust.

6. On the job graduate study.

7. Curriculum emphasis on working with adults. Coordination with the adult education graduate curriculum.

8. Extending graduate programs beyond the limits of the physical campus.

9. Greater emphasis on problem solving, use of case studies, reality testing, cooperative education, internships, etc.

10. Develop a professional-action-oriented advanced degree program in addition to the research focused degree program.

11. Reexamine admission standards for graduate study. Not lower standards but different standards for more realistic goals.

12. Recognition of business and industry vocational education programs as well as those in school houses.

What are the implications for men and women in the skilled trades?

1. Potential union and employer contributions to training funds because of career ladder pressure.

2. Desire for self-instruction packages.

3. Adjustment to new laws which lead to pressures for continued learning in relation to technology, materials, energy, conservation, etc.

4. Greater participation in task inventory and other learner assessment programs.

5. Involvement as on-the-job trainers for colleagues and in training institutes for themselves.

6. Greater adaptation to self-learning and experiences in group processes and multi-media approaches.

7. Developing and stockpiling resources for their own education both on the job and for positive use of leisure.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

Question: If adults can learn into their later years then why shouldn't the age of retirement be extended rather than lowered as it has been over the last years?

Response: I expect that you are asking what my opinion is on that question, and I have a problem with it. If a determination could be made as to when a person should retire that balances individual wishes and production capability, then I'd be for it. But this is a slippery area on which to make a decision. I'm afraid we're going to run into all kinds of conflicts between the individual and his employer on this point. Some individuals may want to keep on working until eighty whether able to or not. I expect that arbitrary retirement at a given age was developed to make the decision easy and it is objective, yet there are all kinds of wrongs with mandatory retirement.

Statement made by person that asked the question: I know many people who are at their prime when they reach retirement.

Response of Speaker: Exactly, this is what's wrong with mandatory retirement but on the other side there are so many problems when one tries to determine when to stop. You see, I'm on the fence, I don't know if there is a right answer to your question.

Question: I've heard both good and bad about many of the special federally aided programs such as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). Are they focusing on the groups that want training and need it the most?

Response: These programs confuse most of us. We really can't keep up with the alphabet soup coming out of Washington. As a theoretician I'd like to see a total integrated development of the field, thus special programs and all the legal barricades around them bother me a great deal. Though I'm concerned about special programs for special groups an examination of results shows that they've done some great things. I'm not well enough acquainted with the CETA program to know how great it is.

Question: What realistic targets can we set for literacy, G.E.D., and other programs for the disadvantaged?

Response: I would expect that one of the obvious targets is employability. Yet in disadvantaged groups, we need to face the fact that they are not in a position to move from their backlog of economic and educational disadvantage and their differences from the cultural mainstream even to entry level positions in a short period of time. There's a great gap, there are those who would say let's accept the fact that we cannot really do it in this generation. We've got to take a longer look at it and in a sense focus on the kids rather than the present adults.

Now I'm more optimistic than that. I think we can move a great distance with adult education programs for disadvantaged if the objective is moving them into the stream of employability. This

may not be into the economic mainstream but it would be a step toward it. I may be overly optimistic in light of the past record.

Question: Recently an awful lot of news coverage has been given to the results of the Adult Performance Level (APL) studies at Texas. I was wondering if you could comment on how that study will be affecting adult education?

Response: That's a good question. The APL investigation in Texas was one which was looked at somewhat cautiously the first year or so. However, Norvell Northcutt and his staff have established and made visible the lack of competency to deal with ordinary day-to-day survival skills by many Americans. The result of this has been the creation of an awareness of great need for the development of coping skills through adult programs, about a fourth of the U.S. population has severe limitations in coping with routine day to day needs.

As an adult educator, I am impressed by the impact this study has had in building a national awareness that the products of our public schools (including many high school graduates) could not balance a check book; could not determine how much money was taken out of their weekly or monthly paycheck for social security; how much was taken for income tax; and could not fill out a job application form.

Now there are dangers in the APL system. The same type of danger exists in APL as exists in the use of behavioral objectives in the elementary and secondary schools. It's easier to find small discrete items on which there's a 50 percent, a 40 percent, or a 30 percent deficiency than it is to find greater deficiencies that are more meaningful to survival in our society.

Just because there are dangers I would not throw out all behavioral objectives. They've done something to help give structure and objectify learning goals. I believe that the adult performance level concept, when curriculum materials are developed along with it, is going to aid programs for the low literates. The program will be more in tune with the kinds of survival needs that low literates have. I'm very positive about it, but I've put up a big red warning flag so we don't carry it too far.

For example, in the state of Oregon there is a movement toward something comparable to the APL as a requirement for high school graduation. I think it's fine that some state is trying this. It should be tried even if it inherits some of the same difficulties that accompany breaking any large program into many small units, for APL let's go full steam ahead but with the warning flag up and research to test the program along the way.

Question: Is there any chance for Educare? Tell us more about it.

Response: I'm intrigued by it and have been ever since Wilbur Cohen first started talking about it. The whole concept is based upon a funding system that's joint, individual and employer contributions whether in business, industry, or government. It would be set up in such a way that every three, four, or every six or seven years a certain block of time would be available for full support to the worker while in a vocational or professional upgrading program.

For example, in the medical profession, which probably has to upgrade faster than any other group right now, it may be necessary that every three years there would be a three month period for concentrated upgrading. This may be the same in the legal profession, or even in farming. The farmers have had government subsidy for adult education for over half a century. It is probably the best example of government help in upgrading a particular vocation over the years. In a way, this could be done through the Educare system because it's part and parcel of employer-employee funding. I

expect that in certain occupations or professions, instead of three months every three years or six months every six years it may be two weeks every six months. It should be set up in such a way that it would provide the best pattern for upgrading on a particular kind of job.

As an adult educator, I think Educare is an exciting idea, even if its somewhere in the future. Certainly it's not one that's going to pass the present Congress. But I believe it's an idea that will be developed and as the recognition of continuing education increases, the support will develop. Another roll of that snowball I mentioned early in the lecture may get us to the point where it will be taken seriously by the majority.

Dr. Robert E. Taylor stated in his introduction today that training itself is a major area of employment. I'm a little suspicious of creating careers for another one million adult educators, but Educare would probably do it.

Question: Today there is a declining birth rate in the U.S., isn't this going to lower the number of persons seeking adult education in the future? Won't the upward trend level off?

Response: It's my judgment that the increase in participation in continuing education, per capita, is going to go up faster than the birth rate goes down. In other words, if the birth rate goes down like this and if the participation goes up like this and you put the two together, the actual numbers may plateau.

In the next several decades I do not expect to see an actual decline in the number of participants even though the number of adults may become smaller. On the other hand, when you examine the census data you will realize that our population is going to continue to go up during our lifetime. It may well be that because of the upward slope of the participation profile there will never be a plateau. Until the time comes when most of the adults in our society of whatever age are participating in continued learning, I don't see much chance for a plateau in actual participation numbers.

We have a long way to go with older adults since only a small proportion are participating. This is very likely to increase rapidly in the next decades because the adults who are now moving up to that magic age, whether mandatory or not, are adults who have the higher levels of education. For example, President Emerson's father, who was a farmer, had a third grade education, mine had an eighth grade education, in just this one generational shift of less than forty years the change could not have been predicted. The children in school during the second quarter of this century often doubled the years of schooling obtained by their parents. This puts great pressure on the earlier ceilings of voluntary participation. No, I don't really expect a plateau.

Question: Everybody is trying to get into the act of continuing education, who should provide it?

Response: At this point I'm not particularly concerned because we haven't gotten close to the ultimate in participation yet. It may be well to try to work out the special functions of different agencies in terms of their basic objectives. Not objectives created in order to use some of the resources that they now find they don't know what to do with it. What I'm suggesting is that at present let's keep that warning flag up and worry about an overlap of services with several agencies striving for the same 10 percent of the adults. These are the ones who are totally committed to continued learning any way. Let's encourage the agencies to participate and serve adults even if they are only now waking up to the need for continued learning. Also, let's make sure that someone takes on the responsibility of seeing how this can be coordinated. Even universities and colleges ought to get their heads together. Decide not who's turf it is, but who can do the best job for the continuing education in health sciences; who can do the best job for continuing education in agriculture; who can do the

best job for continuing education in business and industry; who can lead and who can aid; and let's try to work out these decisions. I wouldn't worry about a little overlap, but let's be damned worried when everybody is fighting for the same 10 percent. This is a problem and an issue in adult education and you put your finger right on it. I'm very pleased, by the way, that some of these institutions and agencies now entering the field have finally recognized adult education. I even find professors of elementary education at OSU inquiring as to what adult education is all about. And up until five years ago even in the great University of Wisconsin and its commitment to outreach and life-long learning, there was little recognition of adult education by those in elementary education. Today many elementary education students in training to be teachers take courses in adult education. As more professional educators understand continuing education there will be more agencies getting into the act. Let's not step on each others toes but let's not be so cautious or naive that we close the doors to any adult who wants to or needs to learn.